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Now on the American War.

THE following is the main portion of a letter addressed by Brigadier-General Neal Dow, of the Federal army, (the originator of the celebrated "Maine Liquor Law," and late Mayor of Portland,) to Mr. Barker, of Manchester. The letter is dated from Fort St. Philip, Mississippi River, September 13, 1862. The writer says :—

The inhabitants up and down the river for fifty or sixty miles come in great numbers to take the oath of allegiance, and all declare that they abhor the rebellion and were always opposed to it, though they were forced to take an oath of allegiance to the rebel government. I explain to them that it is a voluntary matter so far as our government is concerned. Many of these persons are free negroes of property, bright, intelligent, and active men, who understand perfectly that this dreadful war is for the benefit of their race; and they assure me that when the President's proclamation shall come, offering freedom to all the slaves, they will flock to our standard *en masse*. Such a proclamation *will come*.

I have at these two forts about 500 slaves (that were), but who are now free. The masters now frequently send off their slaves as no longer of any value. Nowhere within reach of our troops will they work for or obey their masters; and for seventy miles between here and New Orleans slavery is practically extinguished. In some cases the masters hire their servants. Several masters have come here and asked permission to hire the servants who are at the forts to go and help get in their crops. Of course I consent, and the servants go very willingly. Some plantations with large crops on the ground have no hands at all to harvest them. This rebellion, commenced by a few leading and unscrupulous politicians, in the interests of slavery to extend and perpetuate it, will most certainly result in the overthrow of the institution. The time is now very near when the President will be constrained to proclaim universal emancipation.

At the taking of these formidable forts and of New Orleans I fully expected the war would be virtually ended; for I entertained no doubt that Richmond would be captured. So far from that, however, is the fact, that our grand army of the Potomac—abundantly able to accomplish the work, if well commanded—has been compelled to withdraw, after a series of desperate battles, in which the losses on both sides were very heavy.

The President has called for 600,000 more men, who will all be in

the field by the middle of October. The great difficulty with us has been, that we have been trying to carry on the war so as not to offend the rebels too much, while they have been desperately in earnest. Our policy will change—has changed.

The politicians and statesmen cannot see that this war is a dealing with us by Providence, on account of our great and dreadful national sin of slavery, and that we cannot have peace until we repent and abandon it. Northern people have flattered themselves that the South alone was responsible for the sin and shame of slavery, whereas our complicity in it has been open and constant. I do not mean to say that this is true of all Northern people—far from it. There have always been large numbers who have deplored the existence of slavery in the country, and have anxiously desired its overthrow. This class has rapidly increased in three or four years, until, at the last presidential election, the idea of opposition to it triumphed at the ballot-box. And now God's command is to let his poor and oppressed children go—and we must and will. Until then we can have no peace, even if the country should be severed in its nationality. Slavery abolished and we should have a glorious country, with all its vast interests harmonious, and the people perfectly contented and happy. Slavery preserved and with a restored Union we could not possibly have peace among ourselves. Slave institutions are essentially and necessarily despotic, and there can never be concord between them and freedom. The conflict between slave and free institutions existing in the same country must and will be bitter and irrepressible. In America they have at last come face to face, with swords drawn, and one or the other must die. Which it will be admits of no doubt among us; for we of the Free States are resolved as one man to fight now the last battle with this gigantic iniquity, at whatever cost of treasure and blood.

Our territory is so situated geographically, that we cannot and will not, in any event, consent to any such severance of our domain as the rebels desire. That would put into the keeping of a foreign and bitterly hostile power the absolute control of the trade and commerce of part of our territory, almost as large as all Europe, that now seeks the ocean through the mouths of the Mississippi and other rivers which are within slave territory. Some day the Pacific States will of themselves form a mighty independant nation—but the Southern States of this Union must continue to share our fortunes, as a political, social, and industrial necessity to us. It surprises us that intelligent Englishmen should think it better and wiser that we should consent to a dissolution of the Union. The vast waters of the Ohio, Mississippi, Missouri, and other rivers, embracing in the Free States, and territories a steamboat navigation of more than 10,000 miles, find their way to the ocean for 1,500 miles through slave territory. Can we possibly consent that the commerce of that vast region shall depend for its existence upon the pleasure of a foreign, despotic, and bitterly hostile government? Would England do it? Did England acquiesce in the earnest desire of the Indian princes and people to resume their nationality? Did any Englishman propose a con-

cession of that point? If Cumberland and Northumberland, and Scotchmen on the North of the Tyne and Tweed should rebel, would Englishmen and the Government consent to a separation? And if not, why not, if the opinion is that we ought to yield to the demands of the rebels? There have been rebellions innumerable almost in Great Britain and Ireland, but in no one of them did the Government or the loyal people acquiesce, except at the end of an unsuccessful struggle to suppress it. Why, then, is it thought that we should consent to the dismemberment of our territory, involving, as it would, incalculable evils to the social, political, and industrial interest of the Free States.

"We understand and lament that this war of ours inflicts great inconveniences and even sufferings upon some European nations; and our admiration is excited at the patient and noble manner in which the English workmen bear their privations. But perhaps you will be surprised if I say that this rebellion would be already broken down, and the struggle ended, but for the activity, skill, and persistence of certain Englishmen, who resort to every expedient known to skilful navigators to evade the blockade of rebel ports, and supply the insurgents with arms and munitions of war. Yet such is the conviction of our people. The rebels have had no supplies of such necessaries for continuing their struggle except from Great Britain, so far as we know or have heard. There have been at one time in the port of Nassau, near our coast, sixteen English vessels, mostly fast steamers, laden with contraband articles, waiting an opportunity to run the blockade. If the Queen's proclamation were enforced properly, all this trade would cease, and English working people would the sooner be relieved from their distress. When Walker and his band of desperadoes contemplated their raid into Nicaragua, our President seized their vessels and supplies, and in the case of one that evaded the vigilance of our authorities, a ship of war was sent out after her, and she was captured. It was the way in which our President enforced his own proclamation of neutrality.

"As to the present actual condition of the war I can tell you nothing, for you get all the news before it reaches me. The Richmond campaign has resulted in nothing. But the whole thing, under a new leader, will be undertaken *de novo*. When our new iron-clad vessels shall be out—which will be within two months—I confidently expect the capture of Charleston and Savannah. Mobile is being bombarded while I write—or rather Fort Morgan, which is its only defence. I cannot predict the result, but think our fleet will be successful, as the work is entirely barbette. With Mobile, Charleston, and Savannah in our hands, the rebels will be cut off from their entire coast. This war is enormously costly to the nation in treasure and blood, but its result in the overthrow of slavery will more than compensate us for all our losses and sacrifices, and the world for its inconveniences and sufferings in consequence of it. Our people bear patiently—nay, joyfully, the burden of the war; because they think it the avenue through which four millions of ignorant and down-trodden slaves are to march forth from their

prison-house into the glorious sunshine of religious liberty.

"I have remarked that slavery is all the District of Columbia and all our vast slave States by the force of evil, a merchantable commodity, finding always demand as before the war. They are

commercial value, and cannot be sold at any price. These forts at which I am stationed are in the State of Louisiana, where there are vast sugar estates, the owners of which have made great fortunes within a few years, and among whom negroes were sold at a higher price than in any other State. The New Orleans slavemarkets were the highest in the country for first-class field hands. And it is here, in Louisiana, that slaves are now so valueless to their masters that they are turned off and told to shift for themselves. Such come to me, and, authorised by orders from the department, I give them a free pass to go where they choose, without let or hindrance. Some masters have come to the forts and arranged with their former slaves to go back for wages, and help to get in the crops, and I always consent. That's the beginning of free labour in Louisiana, the most bigotted pro-slavery State in the Union, except South Carolina.

"The newspapers of New Orleans are now discussing the advantages of free labour, and maintaining that cotton, rice, and sugar can be produced more cheaply by it than by slave labour. Such an intimation in any Southern press a year ago would have cost the editor his life probably at the hands of a mob, certainly the destruction of his office and all his property.

"Let English friends, who are truly anti-slavery and friendly to our country, but who have feared the war would not issue in benefit to the poor slave, have patience with us.

"The disenthralment of an entire race, the overthrow of the social condition of a great people, the destruction of the entire industrial system of eleven millions of men, in a territory ten times larger than Great Britain, is a work so mighty that our friends may have patience with us if we do not accomplish it in a year. This work, mighty and glorious, will certainly be accomplished by this war; and our joy will be so great that our losses and bitter experiences in it will be regarded as cheap for so wonderful a result."

"Most truly yours,

"NEAL DOW."

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